Teen Self-Discovery

Need some inspiration? Take a look at these young adult books with self discovery themes.

Accidents of nature by Harriet McBryde Johnson (ISBN - 9780805076349)
Having always prided herself on blending in with "normal" people despite her cerebral palsy, seventeen-year-old Jean begins to question her role in the world while attending a summer camp for children with disabilities.

When Sheree, a tough high school teen, finds herself in a difficult situation, she turns to her mother her friends, and her boyfriend, who calls her Baby Girl and treats her like she's disposable, and realizes that help is within herself.

Born confused by Tanuja Desai Hidier (ISBN - 0439510112)
Seventeen-year-old Dimple, whose family is from India, discovers that she is not Indian enough for the Indians and not American enough for the Americans, as she sees her hypnotically beautiful, manipulative best friend taking possession of both her heritage and the boy she likes.

Inventing Elliot by Gardner, Graham (ISBN – 0803729642)
Elliot, a victim of bullying, invents a calmer, cooler self when he changes schools in the middle of freshman year, but soon attracts the wrong kind of attention from the Guardians who "maintain order" at the new school.

Jerk, California by Jonathan Friesen (ISBN - 9780142412039)
Plagued by Tourette's syndrome and a stepfather who despises him, Sam meets an old man in his small Minnesota town who sends him on a road trip designed to help him discover the truth about his life.

Knights of the hill country by Tim Tharp (ISBN – 0375836535)
In his senior year, high school star linebacker Hampton Green finally begins to think for himself and discovers that he might be interested in more than just football.

Me, the missing, and the dead by Jenny Valentine.  (ISBN – 9780060850685)
Feeling as though the ashes of a girl in the urn on the shelf are trying to communicate with him, Lucas Swain begins to listen in the hopes that maybe she knows something about his missing father that will finally put his mind and heart to rest.

List compiled by Nicola McDonald.
New boy by Julian Houston  (ISBN - 0618432531)
As a new sophomore at an exclusive boarding school, a young black man is witness to the persecution of another student with bad acne.

Psyche in a dress by Francesca Lia Block  (ISBN - 9780060763725)
A young woman, Psyche, searches for her lost love and questions her true self in a modern retelling of Greek myths.

Sea change by Aimee Friedman.  (ISBN - 9780439922289)
When her estranged grandmother dies and leaves her mother the family home on Selkie Island, Miranda meets her mother on the Georgia island, where she discovers mysterious family secrets and another side to her logical, science-loving self.

Smiles to go by Jerry Spinelli.  (ISBN – 9780060281335)
Will Tuppence's life has always been ruled by science and common sense but in ninth grade, shaken up by the discovery that protons decay, he begins to see the entire world differently and gains new perspective on his relationships with his little sister and two closest friends.

Somewhere in the darkness by Walter Dean Myers.  (ISBN – 0590341863)
A teenage boy accompanies his father, who has recently escaped from prison, on a trip that turns out to be a time of, often painful, discovery for them both.

The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie; art by Ellen Forney  (ISBN - 9780316013680)
Leaving the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white high school, Junior struggles to find his place in his new surroundings in order to escape his destiny back on the reservation.

The earth, my butt, and other big, round things by Carolyn Mackler.  (ISBN – 0763619582)
Feeling like she does not fit in with the other members of her family, who are all thin, brilliant, and good-looking, fifteen-year-old Virginia tries to deal with her self-image, her first physical relationship, and her disillusionment with some of the people closest to her.

The brothers Torres by Coert Voorhees.  (ISBN – 9781423103042)
When Frankie asks his friend Rebecca to the Homecoming dance, it ultimately leads to a face-off between a tough senior whose family owns most of their small town, and Frankie's older brother and his gang-member friends.

List compiled by Nicola McDonald.
You know where to find me by Rachel Cohn (ISBN – 9780689878596)
In the wake of her cousin's suicide, overweight and introverted Miles experiences significant changes in her relationships with her mother and father, her best friend and his family, and her cousin's father.

Zigzag by Ellen Wittlinger (ISBN- 9780689849985)
Discouraged that her college-bound boyfriend has decided to spend his summer in Italy and not with her, Robin goes along with her aunt and annoying cousin on a cross-country road trip that leads her to better understand herself and her hidden strengths.

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